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## The Barometer

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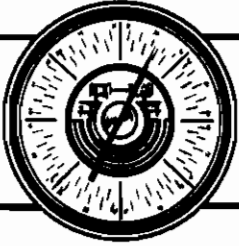
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# THE BAROMETER

(This discussion comments on Professor Vincent Davis' proposed "Universal Service: an Alternative to the All-Volunteer Armed Services" published in the October issue.)

... Professor Davis succeeded in scuttling his own proposal by recognizing that present antiestablishment youth would never politically permit a national policy of manpower allocation. In all the discussions pro and con of an all-volunteer force, including the Gates Commission report, none have focused exclusively and in depth on the potential military recruit, his motivations, aspirations, goals, and values. I would like to inject some thoughts for further study by Professor Davis or others at the Naval War College.

(1) The draft has been a *major*, but not the *only* motivation for youth enlisting in the armed services. This statement is supported by recent experience with the draft lottery system. Many of the current recruits do not wait to know their lottery number but enlist on graduating from high school. These are what we in the Recruiting Service, call "runners": people who for one reason or another want to leave home after graduation. These "runners" are not limited to poor, blacks, or blue collar sons, but are a cross-section of middle-class America, "When" they run is dependent on conditions. They won't run from Cape Cod during the summer season nor from Aroostook County, Me., during potato picking time. They may stick around for summer employment or a girl, but soon tire of a \$70 per week dishwashing job. The vast majority of naval recruits from July to December

are composed of these individuals. The draft is simply not breathing down their necks at that moment. They could opt to wait for their lottery drawing if the draft were the only motivation.

(2) Because of the above, the statement that the armed services under an all-volunteer force would be composed of blacks, poor, and blue collar sons is unsupportable. It can be supported, however, that the percentage of first-term reenlistments and thus career personnel are highest among (1) blacks, (2) persons from rural areas (the South, northern New England, etcetera), (3) persons from substantial unemployment areas, and (4) persons from lower socioeconomic groups. The origins of career designated personnel would probably remain unchanged under any system for initial enlistment.

I would not dismiss the all-volunteer concept too readily. It may have some beneficial side effects, such as better career motivation, increased operating efficiency, and greater job satisfaction for first-term recruits. Nor would I concentrate solely on increased pay to make the all-volunteer concept work. Certain administrative steps can be taken now by the Navy at little increase in cost:

(1) Assignment of younger, career petty officers to the Recruiting Service, who have charismatic appeal, public relations flair, and could become effective Navy ambassadors in the community to offset current antimilitary feelings. Motivational studies show that the recruiter is of major importance in affecting a young man's decision to

enlist. The assignment of a greater number of first and second class petty officers would enable civilians to better identify the Navy uniform—The *mod* look—which is not true for the chief petty officer and officer uniform. Also, especially in the case of minority groups, assignment of younger career petty officers would assist in closing the generation gap between recruiter and potential applicant.

(2) School guarantees for qualified applicants. Too often a potential applicant is lost to another service because of the Navy's inability to guarantee specific training. Out of necessity, in the past, the control of recruits to various training activities required centralization of classification and assignment functions to preclude the possibility of too many cooks and no technicians. However, with the development of computerized information systems, it would seem beneficial to decentralize the classification process to the main recruiting stations in order to provide school guarantees for highly qualified applicants.

(3) Greater recognition of civilian training. We have cases where individuals have spent 1 year in data processing training but are rejected for DS/DT rating because they did not receive training in one or two specific pieces of equipment.

(4) Establishment of a mutual contract, rather than a perpetuation of the present feeling of signing-your-life-away on the part of the individual. This could be accomplished by establishing a train-

ing/enlistment contract. The Navy would provide x training in return for x years enlistment. Training would include recruit training and Class "A" school training. The enlistment contract would take effect on the completion of all training.

(5) Adjustment of monthly quotas to conform to those periods that youth seek enlistment. It has been our experience that the most qualified applicants enlist between July and December of each year. By January through May, the Recruiting Service is scraping the bottom of the barrel and has problems in filling quotas. There are reasons, of course, for keeping monthly quotas quite uniform: school seat capacities, recruit training command capacities, and budget. However, it would seem the prime mover in this system of distribution should be the youth themselves. A model for this system could be formulated, using the techniques of system dynamics and MIT's Dynamo computer.

America's youth does not have its antiestablishment attitudes without some foundation. On the other side of the coin, I do not believe the Navy should be apologetic for any of its programs nor uncertain about its future under an all-volunteer concept. We have "an honored profession"; it can be challenging to the youth of today. It can be sold by recognizing that enlistment in the Navy has mutual advantages, for the individual and for the Navy.

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